

# THE TRANSPORTATION LINK



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Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization

We are all living in exciting times with the ever-expanding capabilities of technology, the increased use of the Internet, and E-Commerce. The President has outlined his vision for using the internet to transform government operations in the President's Management Agenda. At the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) we have made a commitment to transform the way we do government by using technology and the Internet to provide better, more efficient services and to make the Department more accessible to our customers. This is E-Government.

In our lead article we emphasize that E-Government is changing the way we do business at DOT. Small businesses need to be actively involved with this change or they will be left behind. In this article we outline some of the primary E-Procurement tools that you should be familiar with to better exchange information and conduct business with DOT.

February is African-American History Month. In recognition, this month we are featuring two stories. The first is Garrett Augustus Morgan, the African-American inventor and entrepreneur who is best known for the invention of the traffic signal. The second is Karla Williams, founder of FOCUS AMC. Both are role models for innovative enterprise.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of you who have welcomed me to DOT. I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

## E-Government: Transforming the Way We Do Business

### E-GOVERNMENT

At the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), E-Government means transforming the way we do business by using technology and the Internet to conduct all business processes with the public, our customers and our staff. Our goal is to provide better, more efficient services; make it easy to communicate with the Department; and increase productivity.

E-Government helps the government get information out to people and it allows people to have better access to the government. The use of Internet-based technology can significantly increase productivity and reduce costs.

### E-PROCUREMENT

Within the broad concept of E-Government, technology and the Internet play a critical role in the government procurement process. Increasingly, information on contract opportunities, vendor databases, electronic payments, etc. are all maintained and managed electronically. It is important for small and disadvantaged businesses to be familiar with the following E-Procurement tools.

#### *FedBizOpps*

FedBizOpps (formerly known as the Electronic Posting System [EPS]) was designated by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) as the mandatory "Governmentwide point of entry (GPE)" effective October 1, 2001, for posting of Government business opportunities greater than \$25,000, including synopses of proposed contract actions, solicitations, and associated information, and subcontracting opportunity notices.

Using this web-based system located at <http://www.eps.gov/>, vendors can conveniently search the index-accessible database or they can subscribe to FedBizOpps to receive daily e-mail notifications of requirements sorted by selected organizations and product service classifications, or by solicitation number.

Agencies previously posted notice of contract opportunities in the Congressional Business Daily (CBD). Effective January 1, 2002, they were no longer required to do so since access to this information is provided on the Internet through FedBizOpps.

#### *Pro-Net*

Pro-Net is an electronic gateway of procurement information — for and about small businesses — provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Located at <http://pro-net.sba.gov/>, Pro-Net is a search engine for contracting officers, a marketing tool for small firms, and a "link" to procurement opportunities and important information. DOT strongly recommends that all small businesses register in Pro-Net.

Pro-Net is an Internet-based database of information on more than 195,000

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**OSDBU**

Office of Small  
and Disadvantaged  
Business Utilization

wants to hear from you! Call us toll-free at 1 800 532-1169 with questions or comments about this newsletter or our web site. The Transportation Link's content may be reprinted without permission.

*E-Gov. continued from page 1*

small, disadvantaged, 8(a), HUBZone, service-disabled, and women-owned businesses. It is free to federal and state government agencies as well as prime and other contractors seeking small business contractors, subcontractors and/or partnership opportunities. Pro-Net is open to all small firms seeking federal, state and private contracts.

Business profiles in the Pro-Net system include data from SBA's files and other available databases, plus additional business and marketing information on individual firms. It is extremely important that businesses update their information in ProNet on a routine basis. When contracting officers or other users conduct routine searches in ProNet, only firms that have updated their data within the last 18 months are included in the search unless the person conducting the search specifies otherwise. Increasingly, the electronic information (e-mail and web addresses) are a primary means of contact. Companies with "home-pages" can link their web site to their Pro-Net profile.

### **Central Contractor Registration (CCR) System**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has partnered with the Joint Electronic Commerce Program Office (JECPO) of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to use the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system to obtain financial electronic funds transfer (EFT) information for vendors. CCR collects, validates, stores and disseminates data in support of agency missions. Barriers between procurement and finance functions are eliminated with CCR.

Both current and potential government vendors are required to register in CCR in order to be awarded contracts by the DOD, NASA and DOT. Vendors are required to complete a one-time registration located at <http://www.ccr2000.com>, providing basic information relevant to procurement and financial transactions. Vendors must update or renew their registration annually to maintain an active status. CCR saves time and money for companies doing business with the DOT by employing a single transmission of EFT

information rather than separately sending this data for each contract award.

CCR validates the vendor's information and electronically shares the secure and encrypted data with the federal agencies' finance offices to facilitate paperless payments through electronic funds transfer (EFT). Additionally, CCR shares the data with several government procurement and electronic business systems.

### **Credit Cards**

It is important for small and disadvantaged businesses to be credit card ready if they want to conduct business with DOT. In fiscal year 2001, DOT used between 20,000 and 21,000 credit cards (purchase cards) to electronically purchase approximately \$362 million in goods and services.

The benefit to small business in accepting credit cards is the convenience, an improved cash flow, and quicker accounts receivable turnaround.

The benefit to DOT is the convenience, cost savings, and improved customer service benefits that implementing E-Procurement methods provide. Every time DOT conducts a transaction by credit card, they save U.S. taxpayers approximately \$60 in administrative expenses. Last fiscal year, DOT made over 719,000 credit card purchases!

### **The DOT OSDBU Web Site**

The DOT OSDBU web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov> was designed to provide valuable information to customers in a user-friendly manner. Included is information on OSDBU's four lines of business, how to market DOT, contract opportunities, regulatory issues including the DOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program, OSDBU's monthly newsletter called *The Transportation Link*, hyperlinks to related web sites, and news of interest to the OSDBU's customers. A search engine and a site map are provided to help find needed information.

The annual *DOT Procurement Forecast* is posted on the OSDBU web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/procurement/forecast.html>. It serves as a central location for anticipated

procurement opportunities from all of the DOT Operating Administrations. Upcoming procurement opportunities can be viewed by Operating Administration, by procurement category, or an advanced search can be conducted on the data.

### **Other electronic delivery systems**

There are many convenient electronic delivery systems that can be used to access DOT procurement information. For example, on the OSDBU web site at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/about/lists/lists.html> you can register for the *News By E-Mail* system to receive routine announcements on the following:

- ☐ OSDBU News
- ☐ Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Announcements
- ☐ Transportation Link Announcements
- ☐ Conference Announcements

At the bottom of that same web page are hyperlinks to subscribe to the main *DOT News By E-Mail* system, the *FAA Mailing List* and the *SBA Press Office List* for press release announcements.

### **CONCLUSION**

The federal government and DOT have come a long way in implementing the concepts of E-Government. Now, more than ever, E-Government offers citizens and businesses the opportunity to interact and conduct business by using electronic methods. While government use of Internet-based services for electronic purchasing and information sharing is becoming more sophisticated, the future holds vast opportunities for improved efficiencies.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has made a commitment to create an environment where E-Government ideas are permitted to flourish for the joint benefit of the Department and our customers. We look forward to working with the OSDBU community throughout that process.

*For more information on E-Government visit the DOT Chief Information Office (CIO) web site at <http://cio.ost.dot.gov/> or the FirstGov web site at <http://www.firstgov.gov/>.*

# Garrett Augustus Morgan—A Role Model for Innovative Enterprise



**G**arrett Augustus Morgan, was an African-American businessman and inventor. A practical man of humble beginnings,

Morgan devoted his life to creating practical solutions that made the lives of others safer and more convenient. Best known for his invention of the automatic traffic signal, that improved safety on America's roadways. Morgan's

Garret Augustus Morgan, Sr. was the seventh of eleven children born to former slaves in 1877. Morgan's early life consisted of work on the family farm and school.

At fourteen, Garrett moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. Initially, he worked as a handyman. Garrett used a portion of his earnings to pay for a tutor—continuing his education in English grammar.

In 1895, Morgan moved to Cleveland, Ohio. There he worked as a sewing machine repairman. By 1907, Morgan was able to open a sewing equipment and repair service. Two years later, he expanded his business to include a tailor shop with 32 employees. Garrett opened a hair refining company in 1913, to sell one of his inventions, a hair relaxing ointment. In 1920, he established the Cleveland Call newspaper.

In 1912, Garrett Morgan invented a safety hood and smoke protector, which became known as the gas mask. His award winning invention made him a hero on July 15, 1916. While building a tunnel under Lake Erie, an explosion occurred. Several men were

trapped underground. Morgan, his brother and two volunteers donned the masks and proceeded to do what the others before them couldn't—rescued the men trapped in the tunnel. His heroic acts gave Morgan nationwide notoriety. The gas mask has become a part of firefighter's and soldier's everyday equipment.

Morgan invented the traffic signal after witnessing an accident between a horse-drawn carriage and an automobile.

Morgan's traffic signal was a T-shaped pole with three signals. The first two signals were stop and go and the third was a stop in all directions. During reduced traffic, the sign was placed at half-staff to remind travelers to use caution when crossing intersections.

In addition, Garrett Morgan was credited with several other inventions including a hair dying ointment, a curved tooth pressing comb, a zig-zag stitching attachment for manual sewing machines, and a self-extinguishing cigarette filter.

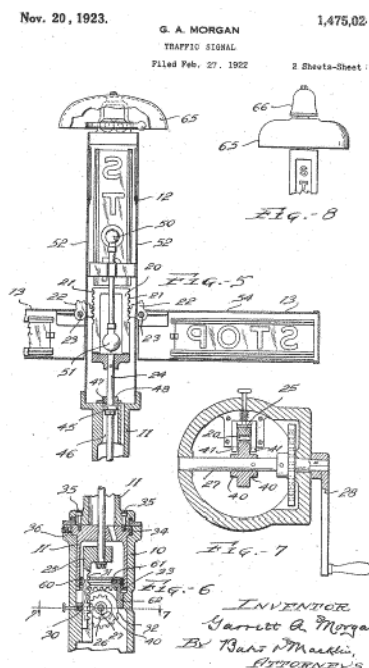
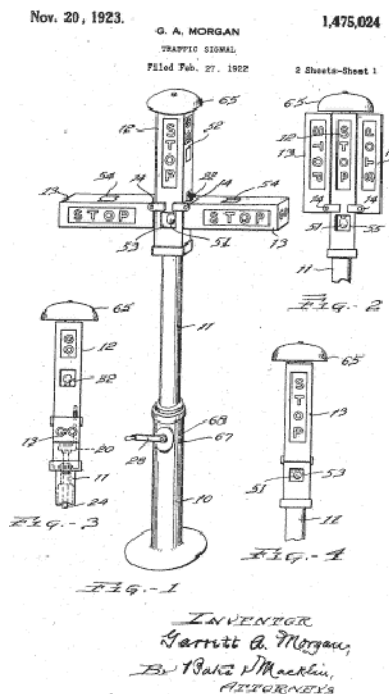
Garrett Morgan was also a pioneer with an active role in the fight for human rights. He was a member of the Cleveland Association of Colored Men from 1914 until it merged with the NAACP and remained a member throughout his life.

Garrett A. Morgan died on August 27, 1963, at the age of 86. His life was long and full, and his creative energies have given us a marvelous and lasting legacy.

## DOT's Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program

**T**he Department of Transportation has created the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program, in honor of this outstanding pioneer of science and invention. The

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technology was the basis for modern traffic signal systems and was an early example of what is known today as Intelligent Transportation Systems. His automatic traffic signal stands as a significant contribution in the evolution of traffic management.

His lifetime of achievements is a model of dedication to public service, public safety, and technological innovation.



## Reminder: FedBizOpps Mandatory, CBD Notice No Longer Required

Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) (formerly known as the Electronic Posting System [EPS]) is a web-based system for posting solicitations and other procurement-related documents to the Internet. FedBizOpps was designated by the Federal Acquisition Regulation as the mandatory "Governmentwide point of entry (GPE)" effective October 1, 2001, for posting of Government business opportunities greater than \$25,000, including synopses of proposed

contract actions, solicitations, and associated information, and subcontracting opportunity notices. When transmitting notices to the GPE during the transition period of October 1, 2001, through December 31, 2001, contracting officers were required to direct the GPE to forward the notice to the Commerce Business Daily (CBD).

Agencies are no longer required to provide notice in the CBD effective January 1, 2002, since access to

this information is provided on the Internet through FedBizOpps at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>.



*Garrett Morgan continued from page 3*

program serves as a catalyst to enhance transportation education at all levels by: leveraging the Department's current technology, education, and research programs; and forging public/private partnerships.

The three goals of the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program are:

- To build a bridge between America's youth and the transportation community;
- To support the deployment of improved education technology that provides better ways for people to acquire new skills; and
- To ensure that America's transportation workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is technologically literate and internationally competitive.

Secretary Mineta points out that, "This is a timely challenge, for we are at a crossroads in the transportation field. Much of the Nation's seasoned workforce is retiring. At the same time, demand for both new and traditional skills is rising. The Transportation Futures program is helping to furnish the transportation industry with the people and skills necessary to meet future demands."

*For more information on the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program visit <http://education.dot.gov/who.html>.*

## New Internet Site For America's Small Businesses

Small business owners now have access to legal and regulatory business information through BusinessLaw.gov—a new web site designed to help reduce the burden of complying with laws and regulations.

BusinessLaw.gov is part of the Bush Administration's e-government strategy. The White House Task Force on e-Government has recognized BusinessLaw.gov as a premier Internet tool for small businesses.

The web site consolidates and indexes, in one central location, links to sources of information in areas of general interest ranging from licenses and permits, to specialized topics, such as e-commerce and exporting. The site also offers information specific to each state and territory.

BusinessLaw.gov takes web technology to the next level by helping end-users identify and solve their problems. It uses searchable "frequently asked questions" and interactive digital guides to lead small business customers to the answers they need at every stage of the business cycle.

*For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U ASK SBA or visit SBA's web site at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).*

## SBA Funds Grant Program For Very Small Businesses

America's smallest businesses will now have access to additional training and technical assistance to help them start or grow a business under a new program funded by the SBA.

Under the Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs (PRIME)—SBA provides federal funds to community-based, regional and national organizations that will offer training and technical assistance to low- and very low-income entrepreneurs with businesses of five employees or less.

The major focus of the PRIME program is business-based assistance to low- and very low-income entrepreneurs who lack sufficient training and education to gain access to capital to establish and expand their own small businesses. The SBA has selected 69 organizations in 28 states to provide this service. During this inaugural year of the PRIME program, SBA is focusing on economically distressed areas.

Entrepreneurs and small business owners who may qualify to receive training or technical assistance under the PRIME program should contact a local SBA district office listed at [www.sba.gov/services](http://www.sba.gov/services).

## FOCUS AMC, Focusing on Customer Service

**F**OCUS AMC of Alexandria, Virginia was founded by Karla Williams in 1992. As a former government employee with a background in contracting, Ms. Williams originally worked with small businesses helping them with the administrative and management aspects of their government contracting needs. In the process, she came across a couple of opportunities that she knew she could manage well and fulfill successfully. This led to her company's current focus on outsourcing.

Eventually her core business became managing support functions for clients, to allow them to concentrate on their core business. Her company does back-office types of activities, such as switchboards and mailrooms. Their work involves activities that have traditionally been very labor intensive. With the common thread of management, they hire managers, develop operating plans, conduct quality control, research appropriate new technologies, etc.

When Ms. Williams started her own business, her corporate objective was to meet the government's needs by providing the best service possible for her clients. Her personal objective was to direct her own work life. Ms. Williams started her company as a staff of one and has experienced continued growth to the current strength of approximately 190 employees.

FOCUS AMC is a certified 8(a) business; however, the company's first two contracts were competitive wins. The additional 8(a) contracts that FOCUS AMC has acquired over the past

seven years have contributed to gross profits that are now approaching the \$5 million mark. Ms. Williams credits the 8(a) program as "a great opportunity" and an effective tool to help businesses get started.

FOCUS AMC recently won the 2001 Minority Enterprise Development MED Week award from DOT's Transportation Administrative Services Center (TASC) for work on a contract involving internal and external office moves, furniture set-up, and the transport and set-up of DOT conference materials. Since the September 11

attacks, FOCUS AMC has also provided support to the DOT security staff at the agency loading docks.

are the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of State. In order to better meet client requirements, Ms. Williams' staff uses a number of resources to continue to stay abreast of advances in technological solutions. She believes in taking a proactive approach with clients and states, "Our goal with each client is to help them improve their office processes. We bring technology to the table when it is available and will improve efficiency. Ultimately we want each client to get the best possible solution that they can afford."

Ms. Williams emphasizes that you have to stick with it and persevere when you are starting up a business. She points out that she has made her share of mistakes, but she has applied the corresponding *lessons learned* to better serve her customers.

In conclusion, Ms. Williams emphasizes that it is important to be

honest with your clients, listen to what they want, and give them even better solutions whenever possible.

FOCUS AMC has already started to expand into the private sector. They hope to build the same reputation there that they have acquired working for the federal government.



**Secretary Mineta (Left) and Richie Lieber from TASC (Right) present Karla Williams, founder of FOCUS AMC (Center) the 2001 Minority Enterprise Development MED Week award**

attacks, FOCUS AMC has also provided support to the DOT security staff at the agency loading docks.

FOCUS AMC provides a multitude of services under their other contracts including switchboard services, mail management services, management and staffing of call centers, medical facility patient escort services, etc. Some of their existing federal clients

*You can access more information on FOCUS AMC by phone at (703) 299-6628, e-mail at [Karla@focusamc.com](mailto:Karla@focusamc.com), or you can view their web site at [www.focusamc.com](http://www.focusamc.com).*

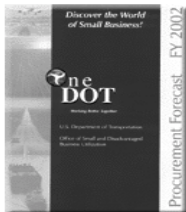
**FOCUS AMC**  
Focused on YOUR Outsourcing and Workforce Needs

**Reminder - DOT's FY 2002  
Procurement Forecast  
Available on the DOT  
Web Site**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) *FY 2002 Procurement Forecast* is now available on the OSDBU website at <http://osdbuweb.dot.gov/business/procurement/forecast.html>. The *Procurement Forecast* serves as a central information resource for anticipated procurement opportunities from all of DOT's Operating Administrations over the upcoming fiscal year. Contact information is included for each opportunity.

Be sure to check the *Procurement Forecast* throughout the year. Procurement data is updated routinely as more information becomes available.

The print version is available by calling OSDBU's National Information Clearinghouse toll-free at (800) 532-1169.



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR  
February/March 2002**

DATE	EVENT	CONTACT
February 20	MD/DC Minority Supplier Development Council Partnership Breakfast Verizon Communications Washington, DC	Kwame Brown (202) 955-6199 <a href="mailto:kwame.brown@mddcouncil.com">kwame.brown@mddcouncil.com</a> <a href="http://www.mddcouncil.com">http://www.mddcouncil.com</a>
February 20-21	Illinois Department of Transportation 'Small Business is Big Business' Conference Springfield, Illinois	Adil Rahman (217) 782-9377 <a href="mailto:rahmanma@nt.dot.state.il.us">rahmanma@nt.dot.state.il.us</a> <a href="http://www.dot.state.il.us/sbe/workshop.html">http://www.dot.state.il.us/sbe/workshop.html</a>
February 21-22	2002 Wyoming Government Procurement Conference Cody, Wyoming	Jeff Sneddon (307) 261-6508 <a href="mailto:jeffrey.sneddon@sba.gov">jeffrey.sneddon@sba.gov</a> <a href="http://www.gro-biz.com/conference_2002.htm">http://www.gro-biz.com/conference_2002.htm</a>
March 6-7	JPL/NASA 14th Annual High Tech Small Business Conference Los Angeles, California	Martin Ramirez (818) 354-6093 <a href="mailto:martin.m.ramirez@jpl.nasa.gov">martin.m.ramirez@jpl.nasa.gov</a> <a href="http://acquisition.jpl.nasa.gov/boo/">http://acquisition.jpl.nasa.gov/boo/</a>
March 11-14	National SBIR Early 2002 Conference Anaheim, California	Sharon DelaBarre (360) 683-5742 <a href="mailto:sharon@dbamlg.com">sharon@dbamlg.com</a> <a href="http://www.sbirworld.com/anaheim">http://www.sbirworld.com/anaheim</a>

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